

Message Text

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TAGS: US, UR, SHUM, PROP

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S VOA INTERVIEW, SHCHARANSKIY, SOVIET

TV CHARGED US JOURNALISTS'S LINKS WITH CIA

REF: A) MOSCOW 6416, B) STATE 84802, C) MOSCOW 6472,

D) STATE 86587, E) MOSCOW 6537

1. DURING APRIL 5 CALL ON KORNIYENKO TO DISCUSS SECRETARY VANCE'S VISIT (SEPTTEL) HE COMPLAINED ABOUT THE REMARKS IN MY MARCH 31 VOA INTERVIEW (REF A) THAT A TRIAL AND BRUTAL MOVE AGAINST SHCHARANSKIY WOULD HAVE A VERY NEGATIVE EFFECT ON OUR RELATIONS. CALLING SPECIFIC ATTENTION TO THE APRIL 4 WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE BY OSNOS (REF D) HE QUESTIONED MY RIGHT AS AMBASSADOR TO MAKE SUCH REMARKS ABOUT A CASE WHICH WAS IN THE HANDS OF SOVIET JURIDICAL AUTHORITIES.

2. IN RESPONSE I POINTED OUT THAT MY REMARKS ON SHCHARANSKIY:

--MERELY ECHOED THOSE CONCERNS WHICH HAD BEEN REPEATEDLY MADE EXPRESSED PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY BY MANY AMERICAN OFFICIALS INCLUDING CONGRESSMEN.

--WERE IN ANSWER TO A SPECIFIC QUESTION.

--CONSTITUTED BUT A SMALL PORTION OF MY OVERALL REMARKS

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ON THE GENERAL STATE OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS WHICH STRESSED THE NEED FOR BOTH SIDES TO MAKE MAJOR POLITICAL DECISIONS IN ORDER TO MOVE AHEAD ON SALT.

3. SPEAKING OF MEDIA TREATMENT AND SINCE WE WERE AIRING COMPLAINTS I SAID WE WERE SHOCKED BY THE APRIL 1 SOVIET TV PIECE (REF E) SMEARING US JOURNALISTS IN MOSCOW

(FRIENDLY, TOTH, OSNOS, WREN AND KRIMSKY) AS CIA AGENTS. SHOWN ON PRIME TIME, THIS POISONOUS PIECE WAS A PACK OF LIES, BASELESS AND COMPLETE DISINFORMATION. AS SUCH IT WAS NOT VERY HELPFUL FOR US-SOVIET RELATIONS.

4. KORNIYENKO COUNTERED THAT IN THE PAST FOLLOWING AMBASSADORIAL DENIALS THE "TRUE FACTS" OF US JOURNALISTS' CONNECTIONS WITH THE CIA HAD COME OUT IN THE US PRESS AND INDEED IN CONGRESSIONAL DOCUMENTS. WHEN I INSISTED THAT THERE WAS NO SUCH CONNECTION IN THESE JOURNALISTS' CASES, KOMPLEKTOV BROKE INTO SARCASTIC LAUGHTER AND KORNIYENKO SAID "WHAT ABOUT LIPAVSKIY WHOSE GUILT WAS FIRST DENIED (SIC) THEN ADMITTED? MAYBE AFTER A WEEK THERE'LL BE ANOTHER ANNOUNCEMENT." HE THEN DECRIED RECENT US MEDIA CHARGES THAT PEOPLE WORKING IN THE SOVIET MISSIONS IN WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK WERE KGB AGENTS.

5. I DREW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN ALLEGATIONS BASED ON FACT AND THOSE WHICH WERE PATENTLY BASELESS AS WAS THE SOVIET ATTACK ON THESE US JOURNALISTS. KORNIYENKO COUNTERED THAT IF THE SOVIET MEDIA CARRIED "ONE TENTH" OF THE HOSTILITY OF US MEDIA WE WOULD BE UPSET. HE FINALLY AGREED WITH ME THAT BOTH SIDES HAD BETTER STICK TO THE TRUTH AND ON THAT THE CONVERSATION ENDED. TOON

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